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Principal instructional leadership practice and its relationship with teacher job performance

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ABSTRACT

Excellent principal leadership actions will be guidance for teachers' high-quality teaching performance. However, the role of instructional principal is not fully utilized, and principals lack the highly effective leadership qualities necessary to promote teachers in improving teacher job performance. This study was conducted in Shenzhen, China to investigate the effect of principal instructional leadership practices on teachers' job performance. This study employed a quantitative approach. The sample of the study was all private secondary school teachers in Shenzhen China, consisting of 297 teachers selected from 1,300 populations. To figure out the research questions, SPSS software was used with the help of descriptive and inferential analysis. The findings of this study show that both principal instructional leadership practice and teachers' job performance are at a high level. Moreover, there was a very strong positive relationship between two variables (r=0.974). In conclusion, the findings underscore the significance of principals' instructional leadership attributes on teacher job performance and provide implications for the government and the school principals regarding the implementation of principal training system or the improvement of educational management policy in private schools throughout Shenzhen, China.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The leader of each school plays a crucial role in teachers' teaching process, focusing on the leadership style and leading practices. Appropriate leadership practices from principals will be capable of motivating the teachers' motivation and job performance. Principal instructional leadership has increasingly functioned well in school management, especially in teachers' teaching practices. In China, the Ministry of Education 2013 released the "Professional Standards for Principals of Compulsory Education Schools" with the highlight of "Leading Curriculum Teaching". It shows that principal instructional leadership is a vital professional work area for principals.

Principal instructional leadership refers to the principal who has the power to affect a teacher's capacity to carry out instructional activities and cultivate the teaching qualities that result in students' meaningful achievements [1]. Principal instructional leadership is conducive to a teacher's effective job performance [2]. In other words, leadership for teaching is an indispensable and important profession for principals [3]. School instructional principals are extensively involved in instructional matters such as curriculum, they try their best to make teachers' teaching practices better and show their assistance whenever

needed [4]. Principals should pay attention to a clear school mission which affects students' learning and teachers' teaching quality a lot, so they should show ultimate support to teachers [5]. Therefore, it's expected that principals will be able to concentrate on enhancing the instruction of teachers and the learning of students [6]. However, Bush [7] noted that the main challenges for instructional principals consist of high teacher turnover and inadequate support in terms of teachers' teaching. Besides, Fevre and Robinson [8] pointed out that principals were better at defending their own opinions than thoroughly investigating and confirming their comprehension of the opinions of teachers. Hence, it is rare for principals to assume responsibility for guiding teachers' teaching.

Teacher job performance is defined as the educational tasks required by teachers to do comprehensively and professionally to enable the students to learn better and make school obtain the school objectives successfully [9]. Sowell [10] explained that the value of the teacher's teaching was closely connected to the ways that the teacher gave the lessons. Teachers with high levels of working effectiveness can foster an interest in teaching, and a greater feeling of dedication to school activities [11]. Teacher job performance is an indicator of the efficiency and endeavor that a teacher is involved into his work. For this point, it's crucial to identify the elements influencing teachers' job performance [12]. When the teacher's teaching practice is ineffective, it will be difficult for students who are having trouble completing their revision studies [13]. Moreover, teachers' unpreparedness attitude toward teacher leadership exerts a negative influence on teaching performance. The effectiveness of instructors at private schools is also declining since they are not able to work to their full capacity because of their heavy workloads and extended work hours, which make it difficult for them to accomplish objectives in the classroom and meet deadlines [14].

Principal leadership is a fundamentally beneficial factor that influence teachers' job performance directly and indirectly [15]. Specifically, the attitudes of teachers about changes in education are significantly influenced by leaders who possess instructional leadership, they are correlated with each other well. Therefore, the principal must provide highly valued visions that are centered on teachers' daily teaching practices and help to cultivate a positive culture to support teachers get effective performance [16]. A leader's behavior or attitude makes sense, when it comes to guaranteeing exceptionally excellent teacher job performance.

However, there are apparent research gaps in the literature. First, few studies have examined the effect of principals' instructional practice on teachers' job performance in private school, but not enough study has been done to understand how the effect works. So, it remains unclear in terms of the correlation between two variables in Shenzhen, China. Second, inconsistent findings were found in Chinese context concerning the influence of principal instructional leadership on teacher job performance. Lastly, limited studies have assessed principals' instructional leadership style on teacher job performance in the Chinese private secondary school context. Researchers are interested in investigating this issue further to determine whether there is a consistent relationship between the two variables in Shenzhen, China. Therefore, the goals of this study are to examine the level of principals' instructional leadership practices and the teacher job performance respectively in private secondary schools in Shenzhen, China as well as to examine the effect between the two variables.

The research objectives led to the general hypothesis, namely, there is a positive effect on teacher job performances depending on the instructional leadership style used by the school principal. It is expected to provide perceptions for the government and principals concerning the problems experienced by teachers. Meanwhile, the study offers insights to the education bureau with the adoption of appropriate training courses or to improve educational management policy for leaders in private educational schools to improve experience of utilizing instructional skills in teacher management.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Principal instructional leadership

In the field of educational leadership, there has been heated discussion on the idea of principals' instructional leadership. According to Jenkins and Allen [17], instructional leaders are involved in goal setting, curriculum management, teacher assessment, and resource allocation. Control, supervision, and oversight of educational activities are the main focuses of instruction leaders. Wang [18] report highlights the advantages of instructional leadership to elucidate the primary role of the educational institution. Practically, principals are both problem solvers and efficiency facilitators. Skilled leaders prepare their teachers functionally well for upcoming challenges [19]. In summary, the behaviors, program activities, concerns with curriculum creation, teaching principles, and attitudes of school leaders toward the teaching process are all considered to be components of principal instructional leadership. Principal instructional leadership is summed up as the actions of school administrators regarding the activities of the school program, their concerns regarding the creation of the curriculum, their teaching principles, and their attitudes toward the teaching process.

Drawing on Hallinger and Murphy's model of instructional leadership, a comprehensive concept of principal instructional leadership with its three main dimensions was viewed. Specifically, the three dimensions are: i) define the school missions; ii) manage the instructional program; and iii) develop the school climate. Defining the school mission is conceptualized as the principal must collaborate with staff to create and share the school's attainable goals that are centered around student success. Managing the instructional program mainly refers to the principal supervising the school with well-designed curricula, excellent instruction, and efficient assessment systems. Developing the school climate is conceptualized as the target that principals' practices should be aligned with goals to take every possible action to promote fruitful outcomes in terms of teachers and students, mainly ranging from protecting teachers' instructional time and developing their professional advancement to providing motivations both for teachers and students.

However, questions remain whether the principal actions concerning instructional leadership practices can help achieve school objectives by instructing the teachers' teaching. Principals can no longer work in isolation; instead, the administrators should collaborate to provide instructional leadership that strengthens the organization's unified professional culture. Moreover, principals who practice instructive leadership with lots of challenges with a lack of continuous monitoring and evaluation, and weak leadership strength. Therefore, school leaders must make the schools' goals come true by focusing on the teachers' teaching performance.

2.2. Teacher job performance

The degree of teachers' job performance is crucial for organizations since it plays a major role in the achievement of school goals [20]. The review of previous studies has provided inconsistent information on the dimensions of teachers' job performance. Imhangbe *et al.* [15] classified the indicators of teachers' job performance as lesson planning, lesson teaching and evaluations, and classroom management. So, the dimensions of teacher job performance are teaching plan, classroom organization, monitoring and assessment, classroom climate and order, and teacher leadership. Teaching plan refers to how a teacher plans lessons with effective strategies and resources to fulfill the students' needs [21]. Classroom organization includes the physical arrangements of the classroom and the integration of students into learning [22]. The monitoring and assessment are essential evaluations of the development and implementation in terms of the observation of the output level of the teaching practices and the students' learning. Teacher leadership is conceptualized as a resource provider, curriculum expert, classroom assistant, and learning facilitator.

Previous study by Butar *et al.* [23] have demonstrated that teachers' job performance is extensively affected by their abilities to design and develop high-quality teaching, their managerial capabilities to run classes in a disciplined way, their creative ability in planning, and implementing learning activities. Efficient teacher performance is pivotal for improving education achievements [24]. Teaching skills, appropriate teaching methods, and sound knowledge of subject matters are some key success factors of a good teacher who makes the teaching and learning process successful. However, ineffective teachers have an impact on school operations, which in turn has an impact on student progress or study success [25]. Teacher job performance is also declining because teachers are incapable of achieving their utmost potential due to lengthy working hours and heavy workloads that hinder their teaching practices in the classrooms [14]. They are in desperate need of school leaders to create lesson plans, conduct training sessions, and provide instructional aids. Therefore, it's important to build up teachers' confidence and sense of trust so that they will be more likely to adapt and improve their instruction until the desired outcome is reached.

2.3. The relationship between principal instructional leadership and teacher job performance

The success of schools is significantly influenced by school leaders, especially with their leadership style either directly or indirectly impacting teachers' achievements [26]. Effective teaching and the development of highly qualified teachers have been facilitated by instructional leadership. Successful and fulfilling leadership skills and practices of principle will improve the efficiency of teachers' performance, motivation, and satisfaction in addition to their roles as administrators and leaders. Thus, competent school administrators assist teachers in achieving the goals of the school by employing an appropriate leadership style [27]. Moreover, it has also been demonstrated that through principals' contacts with teachers, instructional leadership has an impact on teachers' self-efficacy [28].

However, limited studies have assessed the instructional leadership style of principal and teacher job performance, especially in the Chinese context. The relationship between two variables remains unclear in China. A leader must set a good example and act professionally. A principal, who served as teachers' supervisors, had a major impact on how well their subordinates could teach and do other day-to-day tasks in the classroom [27]. Therefore, it is pivotal for principals to make sure that the achievements and performances of the teachers are raised to a satisfactory level. Principals can accomplish this by determining the needs of the instructors and making an effort to address those needs.

3. METHOD

This study employed a correlational design with a survey to gather data from participants by the quantitative research approach. The sample size should be 297 samples out of 1,300 populations under the guidance of Krejcie and Morgan's sample size model. A sampling technique was utilized to pinpoint the exact target study sample teachers with a minimum respondent of 297 teachers in the case school in Shenzhen, China.

Questionnaires were employed as a research instrument in this study. With the principals' consent, it is sent to the respondents using an online Google Form. The stratified random sampling technique was proportionately used in this study when the population is unequal and proportionally stratified. The questionnaire is made up of three parts. Part A consists of specific demographic information, while part B includes items modified from the principal instructional management rating scale (PIMRS). Section C covers items adapted from the teacher job performance questionnaire (TJPQ) which has been improved by Atsebeha [21]. The items of participants' opinions were measured by using a five-point Likert scale with five points, namely "Never", "Rare", "Sometimes", "Often" and "Always".

The Cronbach's alpha value for Cronbach is frequently used as a gauge to assess how consistent each study construct is. Bond and Fox [29] stated that a Cronbach alpha value score in the range of 0.71 to 0.99 in the Rasch measuring paradigm is considered good and acceptable. For the reliability coefficients of the principal instructional leadership practice, the results of three items are: i) define the school missions (0.918); ii) manage instructional programs (0.951); and iii) promote the school climate (0.947). Consequently, Cronbach's alpha value for each item of principal's instructional leadership questionnaires is acceptable and reliable. Meanwhile, the reliability analysis for the five dimensions of teachers' job performance is: i) teaching planning (0.898); ii) classroom organization (0.753); iii) monitoring and evaluation (0.905); iv) classroom atmosphere and discipline (0.857); and v) teacher leadership (0.901). In total, teacher job performance is at a good level and appropriate in the study. Meanwhile, validity in terms of content validity and face validity were conducted for verification of the instrument. So, the instrument of this study was evaluated by the lecturers at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) to determine its authenticity.

SPSS software was used with the help of descriptive and inferential analysis in this study. For descriptive analysis, mean and standard deviation were conducted concerning the level of the principal's instructional leadership practice and teacher job performance respectively. First and second research questions about mean and standard deviation computation were addressed, and the demographic information of the respondents was examined by using descriptive analysis. Table 1 shows the interpretation of mean values.

The third research question concerns the relationship between teachers' job performance and principal instructional leadership techniques. Pearson correlation analysis was used to examine the study's findings. According to Fauzi *et. al.* [30], the Pearson correlation interpretation table was normally used to determine how strongly the variables are related to one another. Table 2 shows the interpretation of the Pearson correlation

Table 1. Interpretation of mean value

Mean	Level
1.00-1.80	Very low
1.81 - 2.60	Low
2.61 - 3.40	Medium
3.41-4.20	High
4.21 - 5.00	Very high

Table 2. Interpretation of Pearson correlation coefficient

Pearson correlation value	Interpretation
0.80-0.99	Very strong
0.60-0.79	Strong
0.40-0.59	Medium
0.20-0.39	Weak
0.01-0.19	Very weak

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Principal instructional leadership practices

The findings of the study were reasonable in identifying the level of principal instructional leadership practices, which is the answer to the first research question. Table 3 shows the findings about mean values and standard deviations as well as the interpretation concerning the level of each dimension of

principal instructional leadership practice. The level of the principal instructional leadership practice showed in the table is at a mean value of 4.18 (SP=0.91), which is at a high level. To be specific, among the three dimensions, managing instructional programs had the highest mean value (mean=4.19, s.d.=0.98), followed by defining the school goals dimension (mean=4.27, s.d.=0.77). However, the dimension of promoting the school climate obtained the lowest mean value (mean=4.09, s.d.=1.06). Overall, the function of principal instructional practices is meaningful and necessary, which is highly motivated in instructing teachers' teaching improvements.

A total of 25 question items were designed involving aspects of school goals, instructional programs as well as school climate. The dimensions of principal instructional leadership practices are efficient and effective. This finding is consistent with another study by Manaseh [31], who stated that an educational leadership behavior centered on teacher instruction and student learning is principal instructional leadership. It is often accomplished by establishing the mission and vision of the school, overseeing instructional initiatives, and fostering a positive school climate. Accordingly, Munna [32] pointed out that instructional leadership will improve the standards of teachers' teaching and students' learning. In conclusion, excellent school leaders who practice instructional leadership typically have well-defined responsibilities and goals in administering schools, as a result, instructional leaders work to motivate teachers to act and make commitments.

Table 3. The level of principal instructional leadership practice

Dimension	Mean	Standard deviation	Interpretation
Define the school goals	4.19	0.98	high
Manage instructional programs	4.27	0.77	Very high
Promote the school climate	4.09	1.06	high
Overall	4.18	0.91	high

4.2. Teacher job performance

The findings of the second objective of the study had five dimensions that identified the level of teacher job performance. The descriptive analysis data has been illustrated in Table 4. As the data shown in Table 4, the level of teachers' job performance is obvious. The monitoring and assessment dimension got the highest mean score (mean 4.40, s.d.=0.99). The teacher leadership dimension ranked second place among the total with the mean value (mean=4.21, s.d.=1.10). For the teaching plan dimension, it showed the mean score (mean=4.15, s.d.=1.01). Followed by the classroom organization dimension, it recorded a mean score (mean=4.14, s.d.=0.77). The classroom climate and order are the dimension that recorded the lowest mean score among the total mean scores (mean=4.11, s.d.=1.09). Overall, the five dimensions of teachers' job performance studied are at a high level (mean=4.20, s.d.=0.82). Teacher leadership is important in teacher job performance, this view was supported by Stronge et al. [22] who revealed quality teaching performance is closely related to teachers themselves who have instructional leadership. Accordingly, teachers should pay much attention to students' monitoring and assessment, in accordance with Adoniou and Gallagher [33], who stated that the best teachers job performance should be those who work actively with students by preparing and planning learning activities, using efficiently learning media and engaging students in a range of learning skills. Therefore, this result is not surprising, as Toraby and Modarresi [34] have asserted that in the views of students, a quality teacher with the best job performance should be well-organized, cooperative as well as fair, and open-minded. This shows that teachers with efficient job performance are vital for improving education quality as well as stimulating their motivations to carry out their obligations as teachers.

Table 4. The level of teacher job performance

rable 1: The level of teacher job performance			
Dimension	Mean	Standard deviation	Interpretation
Teaching plan	4.15	1.01	High
Classroom organization	4.14	0.77	High
Monitoring and assessment	4.40	0.99	Very high
Classroom climate and order	4.11	1.09	High
Teacher leadership	4.21	1.10	Very high
Overall	4.20	0.82	High

4.3. The relationship between principal instructional leadership practices and teacher job performance

To address the third objective of the study, the correlation between principal instructional leadership practices and teachers' job performance of the study was also examined. The result of the relationship between variables is illustrated in Table 5. Overall, Table 5 illustrates that the principal instructional

leadership practices are conducive to optimizing teacher job performance, and the relationship between two variables is significantly strong indication (r=0.974, p<0.01). This proves that principal instructional leadership practices are increasingly being used in school management and gained popularity among teachers. The research results have justified the hypothesis that instructional leadership serves to promote effective teaching job performance by inspiring teachers to process high-quality instruction and molding their qualities into those of educational leaders. Thus, principals that practice instructional leadership could improve teacher job performance. It is highly possible for school leaders who practice instructional leadership style to help teachers constantly gain increased motivation and rump up their job efficacy, which is largely able to meet school objectives. This result aligns with the study of Rice [35], who found that principals play a central role in improving various outcomes within schools, such as teacher's job satisfaction as well as academic performance. Likewise, Kuloba [36] also figured out that teacher job performance is motivated by principals' delegation of duties on teachers' enhancement of their job performance. It implies that an instructional leader is a type of school leader who collaborates with teachers to help them develop best practices in their teaching. Moreover, a principal with a high degree of efficiency would help teachers fulfill their duty to educate students more successfully because confident teachers will carry out their responsibilities more successfully and efficiently.

Table 5. The relationship between principal instructional leadership practices and teacher job performance

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	Teacher job performance (r)
Principal instructional leadership practices	0.974**
**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.	
N-207	

5. CONCLUSION

Principal instructional leadership practice is significant and in a close relation to teachers' job performance in Shenzhen, China. The finding of this study is to provide the Education Bureaus of Shenzhen, China with a reference in strengthening the administrative policy regarding principal instructive leadership in the private education sectors, and it also provides the relevant implications for principals and policymakers alike. On the one hand, this empirical study can guide policymakers to reflect on principals' instructional leadership practices and optimize teachers' teaching performance through the theory and experience of instructional leadership. On the other hand, principals in private schools could provide more opportunities for teachers to participate in student monitoring and assessment. Engagement in teacher leadership increases teacher' self-efficacy which, in turn, enhances their teaching performance. In addition, principals could provide teachers with professional training that focuses on how to optimize their management strategies, develop their reflective ability in terms of teaching plans on teachers' teaching practices, and form an efficient organized tactic in a bid to ensure fruitful students' learning. These skills are important in increasing the level of teachers' job performance as well as school achievements and creating a culture of quality and dedicated teachers.

Ultimately, this empirical study also contributes to the verification of the important role that principal acted on the effective teacher job performance in private secondary schools. The principal instructional leadership practice is regarded as an ideal optional leadership style and can optimize the level of teachers' job performance. Therefore, school leaders must implement such suitable leadership techniques proficiently and successfully. By doing this, the high level of teachers' job performance and motivation can be greatly improved, and the country's educational aspirations will be further ensured. Finally, this study complements and extends prior research on instructional leadership and teacher job performance by providing evidence from private secondary schools in Shenzhen, China. Besides, it is advised for future study with a qualitative approach so that the principal instructional leadership practices and teacher job performance can be explored more deeply. Also, this study can be improved by involving more respondents such as from the perspective of the middle managers or assistant teachers and expanding selected study locations.

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